

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel without prejudice claims 3, 7, 9, 11-14, 16, 20, 21, 23-32, 34-40, 42-46, 49 and 51 and amend claims 1, 4, 15, 17, 18, 22, 33, 47 and 48 as follows.

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (currently amended) A design knowledge information capture tool comprising:
a storage means for storing design knowledge information generated or acquired during progress of a first design project, wherein the design knowledge information extends beyond product design information and includes information on evolution of a first design project and causal dependencies between items of said design knowledge, said storage means comprising a plurality of files, each file having a predefined knowledge structure for including a list of issues to be addressed;
an input means for allowing a user to input information into the storage means; and
a presentation means for presenting a file template of each of said plurality of files to the user to allow the information to be input by the user in said predefined knowledge structure, wherein said presentation means presents each said structure as an array of nodes, each node representing an item of said design knowledge, wherein a dependency between items of said design knowledge is represented by a directed link between selected nodes, wherein said directed link is bi-directional to permit a user to traverse the link in either direction, and wherein said selected nodes represent items of design knowledge stored in different files~~the design knowledge and product design information, wherein the input means includes a design stage or task classification means that is adapted to select a predefined file, with a list of at least one~~

~~predefined issue to be addressed and presents a file template to the user to allow the information to be input by the user in a predefined knowledge structure, each piece of the information being input as a label of a node.~~

2. (original) A tool according to claim 1 wherein the storage means comprises an interactive graph editor.

3. (cancelled).

4. (currently amended) A tool as claimed in claim 1 wherein, in use, a user is prompted by the knowledge structure, to input at least one possible answer to ~~the~~ at least one ~~predefined~~ of said issues, the at least one possible answer being stored as one of the, or each, piece of information at the label of the node.

5. (original) A tool as claimed in claim 4 wherein the knowledge structure prompts the user to input at least one argument that supports or refutes the possible answer, the at least one argument being stored as one of the, or each, piece of information at the label of the node.

6. (original) A tool as claimed in claim 5 wherein the at least one argument is classified as a supporting or a refuting argument.

7. (cancelled).

8. (previously presented) A tool as claimed in claim 5 wherein said at least one argument is classified as a valid or an invalid argument.

9. (cancelled).

10. (previously presented) A tool as claimed in claim 4 wherein the at least one answer is classified as an open, an accepted or rejected answer.

11. (cancelled).

12. (cancelled).

13. (cancelled).

14. (cancelled).

15. (currently amended) A tool as claimed in claim 1 wherein ~~the~~each node appears once only in the ~~predefined file~~plurality of files.

16. (cancelled).

17. (currently amended) A tool as claimed in claim 1 wherein the, or each, ~~piece of~~
~~information stored at the label of the node~~ can be linked to an additional node on the
~~predefined~~same file, ~~wherein the, or each, piece of information has previously been raised.~~

18. (currently amended) A tool as claimed in ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, wherein a sub-issue
to the at least one predefined issue can be identified and input into the storage means.

19. (original) A tool as claimed in claim 18 wherein a user is prompted to input at least
one possible answer to the sub-issue.

20. (cancelled).

21. (cancelled).

22. (currently amended) A tool according to ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, having a processing
means to identify at least one predefined issue addressed on a first design project , which issue is
encountered on a subsequent design project.

23. (cancelled).

24. (cancelled).

25. (cancelled).

26. (cancelled).

27. (cancelled).

28. (cancelled).

29. (cancelled).

30. (cancelled).

31. (cancelled).

32. (cancelled).

33. (currently amended) A method for capturing design knowledge information wherein the information extends beyond product design information and includes information on evolution of ~~the~~ a first design project and causal dependencies between items of design knowledge, comprising the steps of:

storing the information generated or acquired during progress of a first design project in a storage means, said storage means comprising a plurality of files, each file having a predefined knowledge structure, for including a list of issues to be addressed;

selecting one of said files and presenting a file template of each of said plurality of files to the user to allow the information to be input by the user in said predefined knowledge structure, each structure being presented as an array of nodes, each node representing an item of said design knowledge, wherein a dependency between items of said design knowledge is represented by a directed link between selected nodes, wherein said directed link is a bi-directional link to permit a user to traverse the link in either direction, and wherein said selected nodes represent items of design knowledge stored in different files, and~~inputting information into the storage means; presenting the information, during the step of inputting the information; classifying a design stage and selecting a predefined file with a list of predefined issues to be addressed; and presenting a file template for inputting the information into a predefined knowledge structure~~said file.

34. (cancelled).

35. (cancelled).

36. (cancelled).

37. (cancelled).

38. (cancelled).

39. (cancelled).

40. (cancelled).

41. (previously presented) A computer programmed to capture design knowledge information, wherein the design knowledge information is generated or acquired during progress of a first design project, the information extending beyond product design information and including information on evolution of the first design project and causal dependencies, according to the method described in claim 33.

42. (cancelled).

43. (cancelled).

44. (cancelled).

45. (cancelled).

46. (cancelled).

47. (currently amended) A data storage medium on which is stored a computer program according to claim [[44]]41.

48. (currently amended) A system operable to capture and reuse a design rationale of a first project, the design rationale containing data on at least one design issue according to the method ~~described above~~ of claim 33.

49. (cancelled).

50. (previously presented) A system operable to capture design knowledge information, the design knowledge information being generated or acquired during progress of a first design project wherein stored information extends beyond project design information and includes information on evolution of the first design project and causal dependencies, according to the method of claim 33.

51. (cancelled).

52. (cancelled).

53. (cancelled).

54. (cancelled).